

Sowing & Growing: Yarrow



Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) is a deep-rooting perennial and a rich source of vitamins. Commonly mixed with sheep's parsley, burnet and ribgrass to increase diversity and lift trace elements from deep within the soil profile, as a specific herbs mixture, or part of a diverse grass ley, it has been noted to improve circulation and blood flow in livestock.

An upright and sturdy plant, rich green in colour and sometimes downy, the leaves are feathery and very finely divided. The umbel shaped flower heads are most commonly white, but also sometimes pink in colour. It also has a deep root system which helps it stay green in drought conditions.

Several cavity-nesting birds, including the common starling, use yarrow to line their nests. Experiments conducted suggest that adding yarrow to nests inhibits the growth of parasites.

When to Sow: Ideal sowing time from April to late August, yarrow is frost tolerant.

Sowing Rate: 1kg per acre - 2.5kg per ha, yarrow is a particularly small seed, often compared to grains of sand.

Preparation: The most successful results come from sowing into a newly prepared seedbed. Aim to cultivate the top soil to about 5cm, with a light cultivator or discs. The finished seedbed should be fine but firm, with no clods. Several passes with a cultivator may be needed to achieve this.

Sowing: Yarrow is a very small seed and should be shallow sown at a maximum of 1 cm deep. The soil should be rolled after sowing to increase soil moisture contact with the seed.

Management: Caution should be exercised when sowing this species as the seeds are very small (millions of seeds per kg) When yarrow is being sown as part of a mixture with

grasses, it can sometimes take over, especially on lighter soils where grass growth is less prolific.